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586 second wife. Desertion was more frequent on the man's part than on the woman's.

888 The aged were, according to all dependable evidence, usually respected, well treated, and well cared for. Neither abandonment or killing of the aged was ordinarily practiced but may have occurred in exceptional cases.

621 Political life.—Over and above the biological family there was no closely organized larger group or constituted authority. There were no sibs, secret or other societies, or social classes, and no chiefs or ruling group or caste of any kind. Each biological family was for most practical purposes a sovereign political unit. The sense of individual independence was deep. No man took or brooked orders
555 or dictation from any other. However, aggressive individuals of personal force and strength, especially if they had powerful kin backing, at times dominated. Older men of recognized intelligence and integrity exercised considerable moral influence.

612 The next group to the biological family was the kinship group, mostly a paternal one. The members gave mutual aid where called for, particularly in feuds and in blood-revenge activities. The kinship group, owing to common patrilocal residence, was partly, but not fully localized.

619 The five regional divisions of the *Yahgan*, each with its distinctive dialect, had very slight political significance. Members of one division were usually chary of trespassing, at least for long, upon the territory of any other division, unless there were a recognized good cause, such as grave shortage of food, partaking of a stranded whale, trading, gathering canoe bark or fire-making materials.

621 Each of the five dialectic regions was broken up into local groups, each of which appears to have been composed, mostly at least, of members related by blood or marriage (Koppers, 1926 b, p. 5). Each such local group had its own territory—that of Ushuaia, for instance, occupied 20 miles (32 km.) of coast line on Beagle Channel—and its own name derived from its locality. Like the dialectic groups,
[622] these local groups had no chiefs. The local group's chief function
[881] was that of holding the *čiéxaus* initiation rite. The leader chosen therefor had authority only so long as the rite lasted. As the *čiéxaus* rite was an educational device contributing greatly to social conformity and solidarity, the local group's political function was chiefly an indirect pedagogical one. Loyalty to fellow members of a local group existed, but was not as strong as that to one's own kinship group.

628 There was no organized process of judicial procedure. In case
[882] of murder, the victim's kin took blood revenge on the murderer or his kin, or settled with him or them by composition. At times such kinship feuds led to a sort of pitched battle, in which slings,

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clubs, flats, and so forth were used freely, with no holds barred, but grave wounds or deaths were uncommon. Organized warfare did not exist, and the *Yahgan* had no defensive weapons. The weapons used in their feuds were primarily made for, and adapted to, hunting.

Social relations within and between the dialectic and local groups appear to have been normally irenic, but violence and bloodshed were not infrequent. The friends of fighting parties usually intervened, both by persuasion and by force, to restore peace. A murder was strongly condemned, and the murderer often became an outcast. Bridges found 22 cases of homicide between 1871 and 1884—an annual rate per population something like 10 times as high as that of the United States. Mercy killings occurred for the purpose of putting an end to the sufferings of the hopelessly ill. Human sacrifice was unknown; so too was premeditated suicide.

The evidence that the *Yahgan* practiced no form of cannibalism—gastronomic, famine, ritual, or other—is convincing beyond all reasonable doubt. They would not even eat animals suspected of devouring human flesh.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Ownership.—The *Yahgan* resented and avenged exploitative trespass upon their tribal territory or attempted occupation of any part thereof by non-*Yahgan*, Indian or White. So, too, did members of any one of the five dialectic groups (Gusinde, 1937, pp. 964-965) or, according to Koppers (1938 b, p. 176), of any one of the numerous local groups, by nonmembers. Since these local groups seemingly were chiefly kinship groups (cf. *supra*, Political Life), the *Yahgan* land-tenure system resembled the family-hunting-ground system. There was no exclusive tenure by kinship circles as such, by biological families, or by individuals.

Members of one dialectic or local group could, however, exploit the territory of other groups to secure food in grave shortage, to feast on a stranded whale, and to gather firestones and suitable canoe bark, which were found only in certain parts of the *Yahgan* territory. Ownership of personal property, such as weapons, clothing, adornments, and baskets, was vested in the individual. Women and children, as well as men, had well-recognized rights to such things. The ownership of certain other things—food, hut, canoe—appears to have been vested in the biological family.

Food was looked upon as the property and gift of the Supreme Being; wasting it was disrespectful to Him.

Title to personal property was acquired through occupation, labor, donation, and barter. Barter took two forms: plain, or exchange of goods for goods; and by exchange of presents. There was no cur-